

was willing to follow without question and in faith, the teachings of Daniel Webster and those of that school. But it has been my fortune or my misfortune to have come now to a different conclusion. We have been told by gentlemen of this Convention, that had they not entertained the doctrine alleged in this fourth article, heretofore, the events of the past three years, shedding their lurid glow of blood and sorrow all around us, would alone have brought home that conviction to their minds, and led them to give to the Federal Government that paramount allegiance which is here declared to be due. It may be my misfortune, but from the very same ground, from this deep, dark scene of sorrow and suffering, I have come to the very opposite conclusion. I have looked at this question with as calm and dispassionate a view as I could command. I have looked as I best could, into the history of the past, into the history of the formation and true nature of our government, and it seems to me that if the history of the past points out any path in the future that is bright and luminous, as unmistakable as the light of the sun in its course, at noon day, it is that the doctrine of consolidation leads to despotism and bloodshed. I believe there is no security in this land except in the continuance of State governments. I believe there is no security in this broad country for life, liberty, property, or anything that the individual holds dear, except it be in a strict construction of the powers of the Federal Government, and the maintenance of the rights of the States.

It does seem to me, with all due deference to gentlemen who have debated this question, that they have not commenced at the beginning. Gentlemen have told us about the starry banner, about cannon loaded with grape and canister, pointed down the streets of Baltimore, and have paraded that before this Convention as evidence that we have a government. Sir, the robber who meets you on the highway; the pirate, who, upon the broad ocean seizes your ship, likewise exercises a government over you. But is it a government of right, of law, of reason? Is it such a government as the people of these States inaugurated and founded? Is it such a government as rightfully wields the sceptre over the land? I acknowledge that these things were in the streets of Baltimore. I acknowledge that the power of the Federal Government has been felt far and near. It is traced in characters of blood, it is traced in acts outside of and in violation of the Constitution. Its violations and usurpations can be traced in the acts of Congress itself, because Congress has attempted to legitimate and make right that which in the very effort they pronounce to be wrong in the acts of this administration. I said I did not think gentlemen had commenced at the beginning. Why? To tell me that the hand of power is

upon me, is that a reason that the hand of power should be upon me? Is it proof of right that there is an army bristling with bayonets and with banners flaunting in the sky? I see it; I know it; but does it therefore follow that they are there rightfully? That is the issue, and that is the inquiry we are called upon here this day to make.

It is whether the paramount allegiance of the State of Maryland is due to the Federal Government. It is whether the Federal arm at Washington may be extended whenever and wherever it may choose to be extended. It is whether might may become right. It is whether bayonets and cannon may be substituted for law. Because if the fundamental law of the land does not authorize and justify these things, then they are wrong. You may call it government, if you choose; I call it despotism. According to my idea of government there is no government unless it be rightful, lawful, legal government.

Now if this doctrine of paramount allegiance be true, when did it become true? It must have had a beginning. There must have been a starting point at which it had an existence. The existence of the thing now is no proof of the rightful beginning of the thing. When did it have a beginning? When was it born? When did the paramount right and power given to the Government of the United States to do what it pleases, begin. Maryland stood one of the sponsors at the birth and baptism of the Federal Government. There is not a gentleman within the sound of my voice; there is not a man within this broad land, who will deny that at one period Maryland was a free, sovereign and independent State. Go back to the beginning of this thing. When did this doctrine of paramount power and allegiance begin? Was it when Maryland was a colony? Was it when she stood, weak and feeble it might be, but still sovereign and erect, among the peers of the land? Was it when she was a colony, with no bond of union connecting her with her sister colonies, with no common associations binding her to them, with no common judiciary, no common treasury, no common army, no President, no anything binding her to the other colonies of America—was it then? Unquestionably not.

She was at that early period a colony of Great Britain. She had some relations with the other colonies, not because of any connection between them as colonies; not because she stood side by side with Pennsylvania, or Delaware, or Virginia; but because she and they were colonies of Great Britain, and there was a necessary connection uniting them, growing out of the common relation which they held towards Great Britain as the mother country. There was no paramount allegiance to a Federal Government then, that is clear.

Time went on. Causes that it is unneces-